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THE
CHURCHMAN

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ART. I.—THE PRIMITIVE EXPECTATION OF THE
MESSIAH.

CRITICISM is the right observation and estimation of facts. Bishop Butler's rule of the advance in knowledge of God's revelation committed to writing is along the line of advance in knowledge of God's universe. "By particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down the Scripture, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world; by thoughtful men's tracing on obscure hints, as it were, dropped by Nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance," Bishop Butler anticipates that "truths as yet undiscovered" may yet be found in "a book which has been so long in the possession of mankind." Now, in physical matters, when any facts remain stubbornly outside an hypothesis framed to account for them, previous experience in the advance of knowledge induces the scientific inquirer to believe that labour directed to this point might lead to some important discovery. Over and over again it has done so. A moon of some planet, for instance, comes on its path a little later or a little earlier than mathematics would make it, and we are on the verge of the discovery of the exact time that light takes to travel. And the discovery is made. A planet itself diverges to a certain extent from what ought to be its mathematically ascertained path, and we are on the verge of the discovery of a new, unseen, very distant planet. And the discovery is made.

The present condition of Biblical science is discouraging to this attitude of mind. The tendency of its leaders is to trample rough-shod over every nice and particular bit of evidence which is in the way of any supposition, all too

fimsily grounded, to which they have given their adhesion. All sorts of hints and suggestions, archæological or historic, must bend before the prevailing hypothesis. And it does not matter whether they bend or break. The Old Testament is roughly handled. Nevertheless, a return to the temper of mind which Bishop Butler's wise and liberal words indicate to us is inevitable sooner or later. We could wish sooner.

The purpose of this essay is to point out that two sentences in the fourth chapter of Genesis have all along fitted uneasily into the explanations given to them. Each expositor has interpreted them according to a theory of his own; but all have left something that was discrepant and troublesome to the interpretation which has been given. And, further, I hope to show that the great light thrown chiefly by Assyriology on the thoughts and hopes of the earliest ages of mankind tends to strengthen an interpretation of these two verses which does away with the discrepancy and difficulty which attends the meaning commonly given to them. We will suppose that we are dealing with a very ancient writing and with a very ancient subject. Such an ancient document and such an ancient subject deserve the most careful, delicate, and attentive consideration. Even hints and suggestions are precious, and may lead to something important. I hope, therefore, that the reader will give a fair hearing to the subject and a lenient judgment to its proposer.

The first of the verses of the fourth chapter of Genesis to which I want to draw attention is the opening verse; the second is verse 26b. Lest silence should be attributed to ignorance, I should like to make clear that I am fully aware of the critical assignments of these two sentences to certain imaginary writers. Kautzsch assigns both to J, a Judæan writer, who drew upon Ephramite sources in the ninth century B.C.—shall we say two or three thousand years after the events to which he gave a historical form? Ball, in the polychrome edition of the sacred books of the Old Testament, assigns them both to J², the later strata of this account to about 650 B.C., while he gives 16b-25 to the earlier, about 850 B.C.; but Elohim, in verse 25, was put in by the redactor. Professor Kent, one of the latest exponents of the subject, assigns iv. 1 to the early Judæan prophetic source, but makes it apply to Enosh, Adam's grandson; and reads, "the man [Enosh?] knew Eve his wife; and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, I have got a male child with the help of Jehovah," for the reason that "the play on the name Cain, in 'I have got a man with Jehovah,' logically follows rather than precedes the beginning of Jehovah worship." The insertion of "Eve" is due to a supplemental and editorial

addition. I conceive that this fairly and exhaustively expresses the main views of the matter held by a certain school of critics much in favour. I have carefully traced out the complicated and prolonged maze of reasoning which produces this accredited result. I am aware of the formidable array of authority which is produced to back it. I am afraid that I have the opinion that this force of authority, divided on essentials in their own camp, has been brought about by abusively destroying the reputation of every man who even for a moment hesitates to accept the cogency of the reasoning. I know that the final result is to hand over the most priceless remains of the most ancient past to a region which has its nearest analogy in the historical novel, with its roots in antiquity—a novel which God Almighty has used for the education of the race, say some; which is only interesting as a branch of comparative mythology, say others.

Nevertheless, I cannot credit the incredible. There is every token of an amazing antiquity in these interesting, important, and pathetic recitals. If for any length of time they were committed to oral tradition, the memory of men, undistracted in any way by other interests than the simple retention of simple facts, must have been enormously stronger than at later periods. I believe the short, eminently characteristic speeches were spoken by those alleged to speak them; that the statements made relate to actual facts; and the genealogies are genealogies as actual as, and sometimes more actual than, those of the Heralds' Office. Why should I be more sceptical about this than about the sayings and names of the seven sages of Greece, and the names and tenets of her early philosophers, or the sayings and names of Confucius and Laotse and their followers?

But, again, the invention of writing is of tremendous antiquity. When in this chapter we find related in the most unadorned simplicity the invention of the elementary arts of civilization, it is difficult to think that some sort of writing lagged far behind. And the men who did not simply live in the careless enjoyment of the present, but had a reverence for the past and a great hope in the future, would be its probable inventors. Its first use would be to record the lessons of the past, the names of the forefathers, and the dawn of a hope which they were serious enough to treasure—all very simple matters. I can see no conceivable reason why these exceedingly precious things should wait thousands of years, till 850 B.C., before they were put down. The honour of the invention of these imaginary Biblical writers I know to be wholly due to scholars who plainly discard and wipe out all action or immediate revelation of Jehovah from the world.

And however improbable the result may be, the invention of some such imaginary writers is plainly a necessity to those who occupy such a platform. But when a whole school of reverent critics, who are desirous to retain all the known religious influences of the Old Testament on the changed basis of Biblical history, which is not strictly history at all, but has its nearest analogy in the historical novel, with its roots only in antiquity, one is tempted to exclaim of one and all, "Qu'allait-il faire dans cette galère?"

I believe, then, that Eve said the most characteristic words attributed to her in iv. 1, and that they were all the more certain to be remembered because they were mnemonically associated with the first man born into the world. This in itself was an event not likely to be forgotten in the small world which on all human analogy would have an interest in retaining it in their memory. I believe that iv. 26*b* records a fact of supreme interest to this small world. I believe that at this distance of time to attempt to assign with absolute and infallible precision the writer or writers who had a hand in compiling ancient documents into their present ancient form, and the unalliable and absolute dates at which this editing or re-editing took place, is a species of historical arrogance. But I believe that one thing is extremely probable, that the insertion of the name Jehovah, *not into speeches or direct statements*, but into the present narrative, must have taken place after the divinity and mediatorial office of Jehovah was fully established. If this supposition be a true one, it would follow that iv. 1 and iv. 26*b* are more ancient as they stand than the present form of the narration.

The way is now clear to ask the reader's attention to the meaning of these two short sentences of Holy Writ. To take the first. The usual and time-honoured translation is: "She conceived and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man *with the help of* Jehovah, or Yahweh." "I have gotten," we are taught, is not an etymology, but an assonance.

I cannot myself perceive why Eve should not have associated the meaning of Kanah with the meaning of her son's name. The present vowels, even, may be later than the primitive. A spear or lance, or smith or metal-worker, both before the time of Lamech impossible, are, however, given as the true meaning of the word Cain. Cain did not murder his brother with a spear. But that is a small matter. The thing which I submit is that this resemblance of sounds would be the strongest help to the memory in retaining exactly for ages, if need be, the very short speech attributed to Eve. This mnemonic association of names with events or prophecies is peculiarly agreeable to the Hebrew mind, to which was committed the oracles of God,

and very useful, to put it at the lowest, as a reminder of historic facts. But the thing is the translation. I submit, again, that, if no outside reasoning entered into, and if it were not supposed to be quite beyond possibility, the translation would be inevitable: "I have gotten a man, even him who is to be," the Hebrew mode of the double accusative. It is assumed that Jehovah *must* have its after-sense, as the name of the Most High, and then it is rightly reasoned that the words so translated are impossible to Eve. The word, which is translated "with the help of," and therefore a preposition, never has this sense in all its occurrences elsewhere.

The double accusative after transitive verbs is the rule. I will venture the attempt to prove this.

1. It is true that, following the example of the LXX., $\delta\acute{\iota}\alpha$ $\tau\acute{\omicron}\nu$ $\theta\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\nu$, all translations apparently make it refer to the assistance or co-operation of Jehovah or God. The Syriac alone apparently takes it as a double accusative. This is ruled out by Tuch as "a dogmatic explanation, which finds here a reference to the supposed Messianic place (Gen. iii. 15)." But the explanatory, midrashic tendency of the LXX. is well known. The $\delta\acute{\iota}\alpha$ is a quite impossible translation of the Hebrew preposition. "Zwar kommt בְּ in diesem Sinn sonst nicht vor," says Dillmann. There is no other instance of the preposition being used in this sense. The preposition in all other passages in which it occurs has that of *proximity*—with, near, by the side of, in the possession of. The only parallel instance that can be found is once in another different but cognate preposition, בְּ , signifying combination or union—a distinct idea. The passage is 1 Sam. xiv. 45: "Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid; as Jehovah liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground, for he hath wrought *with* God this day." The LXX. misreads the passage. I conceive the parallel is not very strict. The sense that Jonathan had acted on the side of God, and not against Him, that day is not strictly equivalent. In Gen. ix. 1 the sense given to the supposed preposition is "exceptionally" given (Oxford Dictionary). And if there were no dogmatic, outside preconceptions in the matter, it would never have been so given at all. Notwithstanding the difficulty, the text has never changed. De Rossi gives no variant. The Samaritan text is the same without variant.

2. But with, as here, the sign Makkeph as not a preposition, the particle "eth," which has a certain tendency to definiteness, and the meaning "very," is the rule after transitive verbs as the Hebrew mode of the double accusative. A few instances will be enough. "And I took your father, even

Abraham" (Josh. xxiv. 3). "She saw him, even the boy" (Exod. ii. 6). "And Noah begat three sons, even Shem, even Ham, and even Japheth" (Gen. vi. 10). "Behold, Milcah, she also has borne children to Nahor, thy brother, even Uz his first-born, and even Buz his brother, and even Kemuel, the father of Aram" (Gen. xxii. 20, 21). There will be found few to dispute either of these two facts. And the natural and even necessary translation, if we do not force the meaning of a preposition, or refuse the ordinary usage of the Hebrew language, is, "I have gotten a man or male child, even Yahweh." I submit that this first occurrence of the word, as applied to a person, has not, and cannot have, its later connotation. It must mean, in Eve's lips, "I have gotten a man, the very one who is to be." Yahweh means "he will be."

Now, iv. 26b supports this rendering. The difficulty, always more or less felt, as to its meaning disappears if we agree to it. My argument is cumulative. The translation, which alone agrees with the expression "call upon the name of" (which is only used in a good sense), and with the context and whole tenor of the narration, is that given by the Revised Version, and supported by the great majority of moderns and apparently all ancient versions. The literal rendering is, "Then it was begun to call upon the name of Yahweh"—*i.e.*, then began men to call upon the name of Yahweh.

This at once creates a great difficulty, if Yahweh has its after connotation, in the minds of all who consider it a preliminary to the understanding of an ancient writing to think it means what it says. The worship of God, of Jehovah, is the subject of the first part of the chapter. Evil-doing drove Cain from the presence of Jehovah. Worship passed out of his life and the life of his children, and they settled down to make the best of *this* life. But the evident intention of the record is that it was treasured in the line of Seth, till that line, too, became spotted by the world. This difficulty was felt from early times till now.

Notwithstanding the difficulty, there is no variant in reading in any MS. known to De Rossi, and the Samaritan has no variant reading in its MSS.; but it *may* be read "then he began." The difficulty has been variously got rid of. Ball cuts the Gordian knot by altering the text. He strikes out "then" altogether, and reads instead "he" emphatic. He says the present text is "an attempt to soften the contradiction of P's statement (Exod. vi. 3)." Kent has a still freer mode, as above. He reads, "He was the first to call on the name of Jehovah," wiping out the testimony of the first

part of the chapter, and transposes iv. 1 to read after this of Enosh, giving Eve to the editor—a very curious editor, desirous of raising insuperable difficulties in a plain account. The Septuagint is explanatory, and ignores the word “then” altogether and mistranslates the verb. “This man set his hope in calling upon the Lord God”—continuing “the Lord God” of chaps. ii. and iii.—as one would think evidently with no underlying text. Compare “God” for Jehovah in the LXX. of iv. 1, where it is generally agreed there is no underlying text. The Vulgate translates, “he began.” Luther translates, “At that time they began to preach of the Lord’s name,” a meaning doubtless involved, but an inaccurate rendering of a well-accustomed phrase. Others translate, “Then began men to name themselves by Jehovah’s name,” a mode of rendering which forces the phrase still more, and is strictly impossible. The Hebrew doctors got rid of the difficulty by translating, “Then men profaned the calling upon the name of the Lord,” and see in it the beginning of idol worship. This, but by no means clearly, may have the support of Josephus, probably not of Philo. But this introduces an idea which is foreign to the context and inconsistent with the neighbouring usage of the verb, which means “to begin.” *Alii alia.*

Now, all these attempts to explain or elude the difficulty are, as I hope to be able to show, only valuable as pointing to a difficulty which has always been felt. The abler commentators tend to retain both the text and the meaning. The fact that the text has stood, the difficulty notwithstanding, seems to me a striking testimony to its integrity.

Let us see whether the context hangs together in an interpretation which does away with the difficulty altogether. Eve was promised a seed who, though suffering himself, should restore all things and finally destroy evil. The promise, though enigmatically expressed, is clear, and very generally recognised as the protevangelium. Her first child, very naturally, as no time was given, was triumphantly received, not only with the general joy of womanhood, but with the specific joy that “he who is to be” is born into the world. That has been generally recognised. Now, there is a world of pathetic, deeply-moving, unwritten history in the names given by these ancient parents to their children. Compare the names given by Moses in exile to his two men children. The early infancy of Cain, probably displaying more of the despondent brooding and rebellious pettishness of the Fall than the character of a redeemer, gave Eve a chill of disappointment. She gave the name of Abel to her second man-child—“a breath,” “vanity.” Cain turned out, not a redeemer, but a murderer, and a great

and lasting schism began in the family of man. But again hope renewed in the birth of another man-child. She called his name Seth, for, saith she, "God hath appointed me another *seed*" (Gen. iii. 15) "instead of Abel, for Cain slew him." Notice she speaks of God as Elohim. But Seth, it soon became evident, was not "He who should come," and though many unrecorded births were coming into the world, the emphasis of disappointment is recorded in the name Seth gave to Eve's grandson Enosh. They were now possessed by experience of the essential weakness and frailty of human nature. Redemption was not to be expected from mere human nature. Enosh is indeed only a man. It equals Adam as a proper name, but it adds the idea of weakness and failing (Dillmann). It points in itself to its antithesis, God. Then first began men more strictly to be familiarized with the difference between man and God (Ewald). And the relation goes on in strict conformity to the evolution of the ideas: "Then it was begun to call upon the name of Yahweh." They did not give up the Messianic hope, but they transfigured it. They held to the promise of God, but it became the subject of an inspired inference. "Then began men to worship and approach with prayer Him who is to be." They became confident that no mere man could accomplish the restoration of all things. They saw—near or from afar, they did not know—an incarnation. The seed of the woman must be Divine to be able to do this—the Son of God as well as the Son of man, to be able to bring any hope at all.

The idea of a Divine Redeemer had become part of the heritage of the *race*, in the hope of which the serious and godly of them, with more or less distinctness, lived and died. It was the priceless treasure of Noah and his sons when they founded a new world. The inevitable proleptic use of the name Yahweh in its after connotation in the narration has obscured what the difficulty in other explanations of two difficult passages of the record still reveals. This use may have occurred in documents far earlier than Moses. My argument is still cumulative. This tradition pours a clear light upon the rest of the Old Testament. Again, lest silence should be taken for ignorance, I may be allowed to say that I am aware of the learned researches into the origin of the tetragrammaton, which more or less set aside the Hebrew account of it, which is very plain and distinct. But I prefer to believe that the Hebrews knew best what its origin was.

Moses asks by what name he is to speak of God the Revealer to the children of Israel. He is answered: "I am about to be what I am about to be." Say to them, "I who am He who is to be hath sent Me unto you." Now, this name is given to Moses as a credential to the children of

Israel, as something which would stir them by touching their deepest faith and hope. If there was nothing in their treasured traditions—already, I am persuaded, written down—if there was nothing which these words touched or stirred in the deepest degree, the name of the messenger of the bush so given was no credential at all. That it was a credential, which served Moses in good stead, proves that it touched the Divine Messianic hope which was committed to them. They were feeling keenly human impotence. The name of the Divine Redeemer revived their hope. When, again, Yahweh (“He who is to be”), the one Mediator between God and man. Divine Himself, says to Moses again (Exod. vi. 2), “I am He who is to be; and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob as God Almighty: by My name He who is to be I was not known unto them,” I cannot understand that something perfectly new and strange was introduced. The object was to comfort Moses in his bitter disappointment by the announcement of the beginning of a promised redemption. The Fathers were subject to death and homelessness, under Almighty protection, with nothing but a promise “greeted from afar.” Now the promise grows nearer. The coming one is near, as His wonderful works declare (Ps. lxxv. 1). Now the slow process of eternal redemption was beginning; the hope of Eve in the slow evolution of God’s plan was to be forwarded a step onwards. The redemptive action promised was beginning. The name itself was—is not this the implication?—familiar and comfortable to Moses and his people.

That the name Yahweh was unknown is difficult to understand without the most unreasonable scepticism with regard to the truth of the Hebrew record—a scepticism we should not have with regard to Homer or Herodotus. Yahweh is part of the composition of the name of Moses’ mother, Jochabed. “Yah, or Yahweh, is glory.” It was common in the speech of Laban and Bethuel. The idea of the Divinity of the coming one was kept before the minds of the Fathers by the repeated manifestation of Jehovah, or Yahweh, in the likeness of a man—*proludia incarnationis*. “Abraham exulted that he should see My day, and he saw it, and was glad. Before Abraham was, I am.” The expectation of a Divine Redeemer, “He who is, who was, and who is to be,” as St. John is inspired to translate the name, was bound up in the tradition of the men that walked with God. It was once part of the common heritage of the race. When non-Israelite Job therefore says—or, if you will, is made to say by the poet—“I know that my Redeemer liveth, and in the latter day shall stand upon the earth,” he simply alluded to something well known. That this is so is very strongly borne out by

the context and right exegesis of the whole passage. I venture to translate this difficult place (Job xix. 25) as follows: "I, too (I is emphatic, I, as well as you orthodox people), know that my Redeemer liveth, and late in time He shall stand upon the earth. And after my skin (which has so suffered), though they strike off this (poor body altogether, this, which you see), even freed from my flesh, I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, (with my individuality unchanged) even though my reins are consumed in my breast."

Whether living on the earth or numbered among the dead, he should see his Divine Redeemer incarnated. Job protests his orthodoxy in the ancient creed of the fathers, which suffering has not destroyed in him, but rather raised to its highest pitch of elevation. He goes on: "For ye should say, for what reason are we persecuting, when also the root of the word is found in him?" Rosenmüller, a quite unprejudiced witness, says: "Quibus (of his detractors) objurgationibus jam solennem fidei suæ professionem opponit." Job sets against the insinuation that he does not really know God a solemn profession of his orthodox faith. It is the first *credo* extant.

When Micah says He shall be born in Bethlehem "whose goings forth are from old times" (alluding to the *præ-ludia incarnationis* of the ancient times of his race), "from the days of eternity" (alluding to the Divine hope of it); and when Isaiah gives to Him the new name "God joined with us," and says, "Unto us a child is born" (κ. τ. λ.), they introduce no sudden new hope, but are only faithful to the ancient one, and expand it. Yahweh—the coming one—was the Son of God, of whom kings and deliverers were faint and transitory representations. All Nature rejoiced at His coming to establish truth and righteousness in the round world and for all the peoples. Yahweh was coming as a shepherd to care for each individual of His flock with a Divine care. And the partial deliverance that He wrought at the Exodus should be forgotten in the greater work which was before Him.

The view here advocated of the meaning of Genesis iv. 1 and 26b is not exactly new. It has been held and receded from. But I am confident that it receives so strong a reinforcement from the restored remains, chiefly cuneiform, of the most ancient times, as to go far to establish it as a settled piece of exegesis. The cumulative proof of my position, derived from this source, I hope to give in the next issue of the CHURCHMAN.

F. ERNEST SPENCER.

(To be continued.)